

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 149

June 27, 1997, 12:40 pm
Page S-6683 Temp. Record

TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT/More Taxes for More Health Insurance

SUBJECT: Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 . . . S. 949. Kennedy motion to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the Kennedy amendment No. 573.

ACTION: MOTION REJECTED, 30-70

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 949, the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, will provide net tax relief of \$76.8 billion over 5 years and \$238 billion over 10 years. The cost will be more than offset by the economic dividend (\$355 billion over 10 years) that will result from balancing the budget in fiscal year (FY) 2002. This bill will enact the largest tax cut since 1981 and the first tax cut since 1986. It will give cradle-to-grave tax relief to Americans: it will give a \$500-per-child tax credit, education tax relief, savings and investment tax relief, retirement tax relief, and estate tax relief. Over the first 5 years, approximately three-fourths of the benefits will go to Americans earning \$75,000 or less. It will eliminate a third of the increased tax burden imposed by the 1993 Clinton tax hike, which was the largest tax hike in history.

The Kennedy amendment would add yet another 23-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes, and would increase the excise taxes on other tobacco products proportionately, and would add yet another \$12 billion to the child health care initiative to insure currently uninsured children. (President Clinton, in his budget proposal for this year, originally requested Congress to approve approximately \$6 billion for this initiative. The budget agreement between Congress and the President agreed to provide \$16 billion. The Balanced Budget Act (see vote No. 160) provided that \$16 billion. This bill will provide an additional \$8 billion, bringing the total amount for this new program to 4 times the amount the Clinton Administration originally said was necessary, and \$8 billion more than the amount it agreed to in the budget agreement. The Kennedy amendment would add yet another \$12 billion in new spending, which would bring the total to 6 times, or 600 percent, more than originally requested by President Clinton.)

The amendment was offered after all debate time had expired. However, by unanimous consent some debate was permitted. After debate, Senator Domenici raised a point of order that the amendment violated the Budget Act. Senator Kennedy then moved to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to waive favored the amendment; those opposing the motion to waive opposed the amendment.

(See other side)

YEAS (30)		NAYS (70)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (30 or 67%)	Republicans (55 or 100%)	Democrats (15 or 33%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Akaka	Kennedy	Abraham	Hutchinson	Baucus		
Biden	Kerry	Allard	Hutchison	Breaux		
Bingaman	Kohl	Ashcroft	Inhofe	Bryan		
Boxer	Lautenberg	Bennett	Jeffords	Byrd		
Bumpers	Leahy	Bond	Kempthorne	Conrad		
Cleland	Levin	Brownback	Kyl	Ford		
Daschle	Lieberman	Burns	Lott	Graham		
Dodd	Mikulski	Campbell	Lugar	Hollings		
Dorgan	Murray	Chafee	Mack	Inouye		
Durbin	Reed	Coats	McCain	Kerrey		
Feingold	Reid	Cochran	McConnell	Landrieu		
Feinstein	Sarbanes	Collins	Murkowski	Moseley-Braun		
Glenn	Torricelli	Coverdell	Nickles	Moynihan		
Harkin	Wellstone	Craig	Roberts	Robb		
Johnson	Wyden	D'Amato	Roth	Rockefeller		
		DeWine	Santorum			
		Domenici	Sessions			
		Enzi	Shelby			
		Faircloth	Smith, Bob			
		Frist	Smith, Gordon			
		Gorton	Snowe			
		Gramm	Specter			
		Grams	Stevens			
		Grassley	Thomas			
		Gregg	Thompson			
		Hagel	Thurmond			
		Hatch	Warner			
		Helms				
					EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:	
					1—Official Business	
					2—Necessarily Absent	
					3—Illness	
					4—Other	
					SYMBOLS:	
					AY—Announced Yea	
					AN—Announced Nay	
					PY—Paired Yea	
					PN—Paired Nay	

NOTE: A three-fifths majority (60) vote of the Senate is required to waive the Budget Act. Following the failure of the motion to waive, the point of order was sustained and the amendment thus fell.

Those favoring the motion to waive contended:

This amendment would increase the tobacco tax again and would use \$12 billion of the amount raised to increase spending on the child health care initiative. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has released estimates showing that the \$24 billion being given will not be enough to get the job done. The Administration and the American people support the Kennedy amendment to add another \$12 billion. We hope our colleagues will support it as well.

Those opposing the motion to waive contended:

The Administration originally requested \$6 billion, and then in the bipartisan budget agreement it accepted the much higher offer of \$16 billion. Instead of being satisfied with that \$16 billion, or even the extra \$8 billion added on top of that amount by this bill, we are now told that the Administration supports the Kennedy amendment to add yet another \$12 billion. Taxpayers cannot afford unlimited spending; \$36 billion is too much, and it is much more than should be necessary to get the job done. We do not doubt the ability of the Federal Government to take every penny of that \$36 billion and spend it, even though much less money would suffice, but that is hardly a rationale for constantly upping the ante on the total amount to spend. Our Democratic colleagues have an insatiable appetite to spend money. If we were to propose a \$100 billion initiative to insure uninsured children, they would ask for \$150 billion, and if they got it they would immediately whine that they really wanted to spend \$200 billion. It does not seem to matter to our colleagues in either Congress or the White House that the deal was to spend \$16 billion; apparently their word is good for only a day or so. Frankly, if this is the way they are going to act on this aspect of the bipartisan agreement, we may have to consider other aspects of the agreement open to further amendment as well. The Kennedy amendment is clearly wasteful spending and is clearly in violation of the bipartisan budget agreement. The Budget Act should not be waived for its consideration.